I have been told that this is where opinions on the Microsoft settlement should be sent. Please correct me is I am misteaken.

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As I understand the current state of the Microsoft (MS) antitrust case, MS has been found guilty of abusing its monopoly position. The proposed settlement is that MS will be subject to government oversight for 5 to 7 years. As a 42 year old MIS veteran with Math and Computer Science degrees and over 15 years experience designing and managing computer systems for companies with up to 1,500 users I would like to offer a simple vision of what "conduct" the government should insist that MS follow.

MS has used its dominance of their Operating Systems (OS) to achieve dominance of the Applications that run on top of the OS. The object of the government oversight should be to break MS's lock on the link between the OS and the Applications. The only way to do this is to FORCE MS to publish the documented (and undocumented) Application Program Interfaces (APIs) in the OS necessary to load and run MS Windows Applications. MS will scream bloody murder, and try to spin this as un-American, but running an abusive monopoly is un-American too. Publishing ALL of the necessary APIs should enable other OS vendors to modify their OSs so that they can run industry standard Windows Applications (including Microsoft Office). I have emulated other OSs like Windows on top of OSs like Macintosh and UNIX. so I have seen it work to varying degrees. Unfortunately these emulated MS OSs have been problematic because they had to be reverse engineered without MS's support. Not only doesn't MS support OS emulation, they have been proven in court to sabotage these efforts (DRDOS).   If the government FORCED MS to cooperate then the other OSs could be enhanced to run MS programs natively.

Compliance would be EASY to monitor. If MS were forced to release their OS APIs, then I predict a stampede in the LINUX world (and probably the UNIX and Mac world) to support the APIs in order to run native Windows Applications.   The LINUX community already has a global and public means of development and review for projects, and I am sure that a Windows port would become a high priority multi-year project. LINUX should be used to verify compliance because it is the ONLY transparent OS allowing anybody in the world to view the source code of the OS. If MS complies then the LINUX world will be able to make a workable clone of the MS OS. This OS clone would run on top of LINUX and be able to run all MS Applications. If MS "forgets" to mention some of the APIs, the LINUX crowd with its global review system will identify what is missing. If a clone MS OS can be

built and it runs MS Applications, then MS compliance will have been achieved. Microsoft Excel, Word, Media Player, Internet Explorer, and Power Point and any other MS Applications that the US government uses could be the applications used to verify compliance.

Even though MS would cry bloody murder, they shouldn't worry unless they are afraid that their OS is so weak that a LINUX based clone could outperform the MS OS. Either way the consumer benefits. If the MS OS is superior, then the consumer has two choices: buy the MS OS or use the slower but free LINUX clone. If the free LINUX version of the MS OS ends up being superior then the consumer is allowed to use a higher quality lower priced (free) product. Either way the MS monopoly on the OS and the abuses that have resulted from the monopoly will be fixed.

By eliminating MS's monopoly on the OS, I predict a new golden age in software development. There should be NO time limit on the publication of the APIs, as long as MS makes OSs they should be forced to publish the APIs.

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